

Mercury and Your School



High Schools



Region 7

Types of Mercury

- Elemental Mercury (quicksilver)

- Is the only liquid metal at room temperature, and
- Can be present in certain devices used around your school and home.

- Inorganic Mercury (mercuric salts)

- Organic Mercury (methyl mercury)

This presentation will focus on elemental mercury and the hazards it presents.



Region 7

Mercury in the Environment

Mercury enters the environment from:

- Natural sources such as volcanoes and the weathering of rocks; and
- Human activities such as combustion of coal, mining, and other industrial processes.





Health Effects

- Exposure to elemental mercury occurs when you come in contact with it. You might be exposed by breathing it, ingesting it, or touching it.
- If you are exposed to mercury, many factors determine whether you'll be harmed. These factors include the dose (how much), the duration (how long), and how you come in contact with it.



In Schools

Mercury is used in several types of materials/devices in schools:

- Thermometers
- Barometers
- Thermostats
- Fluorescent light bulbs
- Mercury switches
- Mercury vapor lamps
- Charles' law tubes



In Case of a Spill

- Remain calm;
- Don't touch the mercury or try to clean it up yourself;
- Notify the proper authorities;
- Remove yourself from the area; and
- Don't return to the room where the spill occurred until you are told it is safe.

